ROSE™
THE FUTURE OF COMICS
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EST. 1992
MEREDITH FINCH • IG GUARA
#4

The Story So Far...

In the land of Ttereve, magical ability is a death sentence. Rose's village is destroyed and her mother killed when Queen Drucilla senses the emergence of a new magical power in her kingdom. Convinced that the queen is behind her loss, Rose embarks on a quest for vengeance and encounters a band of rebels with their own agenda.

Soon after, the group is separated as Tel and Will remain behind to allow Will time to recover from the wound he received in his encounter with one of the Fallen. Rose and Ila journey to Millhaven to meet with the council about the rebellion. During their trip, Ila opens up to Rose about her reasons for hating Drucilla and an unexpected accident results in a further manifestation of Rose's power as a Guardian.

When they finally reach Millhaven, Ila and Rose are betrayed by Ila's daughter-in-law, Margaret. Will the two women be able escape and continue their quest to unite Rose and Thorne? Find out now in the next exciting chapter of ROSE.

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MILLHAVEN.
NO! I AIN'T GOING ANYWHERE NEAR THAT PLACE. LOOK AT ALL THEM GUARDS!
YER GONNA GET US KILLED, WILL...AND F'R WHAT? WE DON'T EVEN KNOW IF ILA'S IN THERE.
THAT HOUSE BELONGS TO MARGARET, ILA'S DAUGHTER-IN-LAW. IT'S TOO MUCH OF A COINCIDENCE.
I THOUGHT YOU SAID THE GURL'S GOT MAGIC. CAN'T SHE JUST WAVE HER HANDS OR SOMETHIN'?
WE CAN'T TAKE THAT CHANCE! WITHOUT ILA, THE RESISTANCE IS DEAD.
I'M GOING. WITH OR WITHOUT Y...!
BJARK?! YOU'RE BACK! GOOD.
SOMETHING TELLS ME THINGS ARE ABOUT TO GET INTERESTING.

MARGARET! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!
I'M PUTTING AN END TO THIS, ONCE AND FOR ALL!
SOMEONE'S GOTTA STOP YOU FROM SPREADING MORE OF YOUR LIES...
...YOU AND YOUR FALSE GUARDIAN.
DROP YOUR WEAPONS, REBEL!
WEAPONS?
YOU MEAN THIS OLD STICK?
YOU WOULD NOT DENY AN OLD WOMAN THE ONLY SUPPORT SHE HAS LEFT IN HER OLD AGE, WOULD YOU?
DON'T LISTEN TO HER! TAKE THE STAFF!
WHAT'S SHE GONNA...
I HAVE NOT COME THIS FAR...
THWACK
...TO LET A GRIEF-STRICKEN NINNY AND A COUPLE OF MUSCLE-BOUND MEATHEADS STOP ME NOW!
AHHHH!

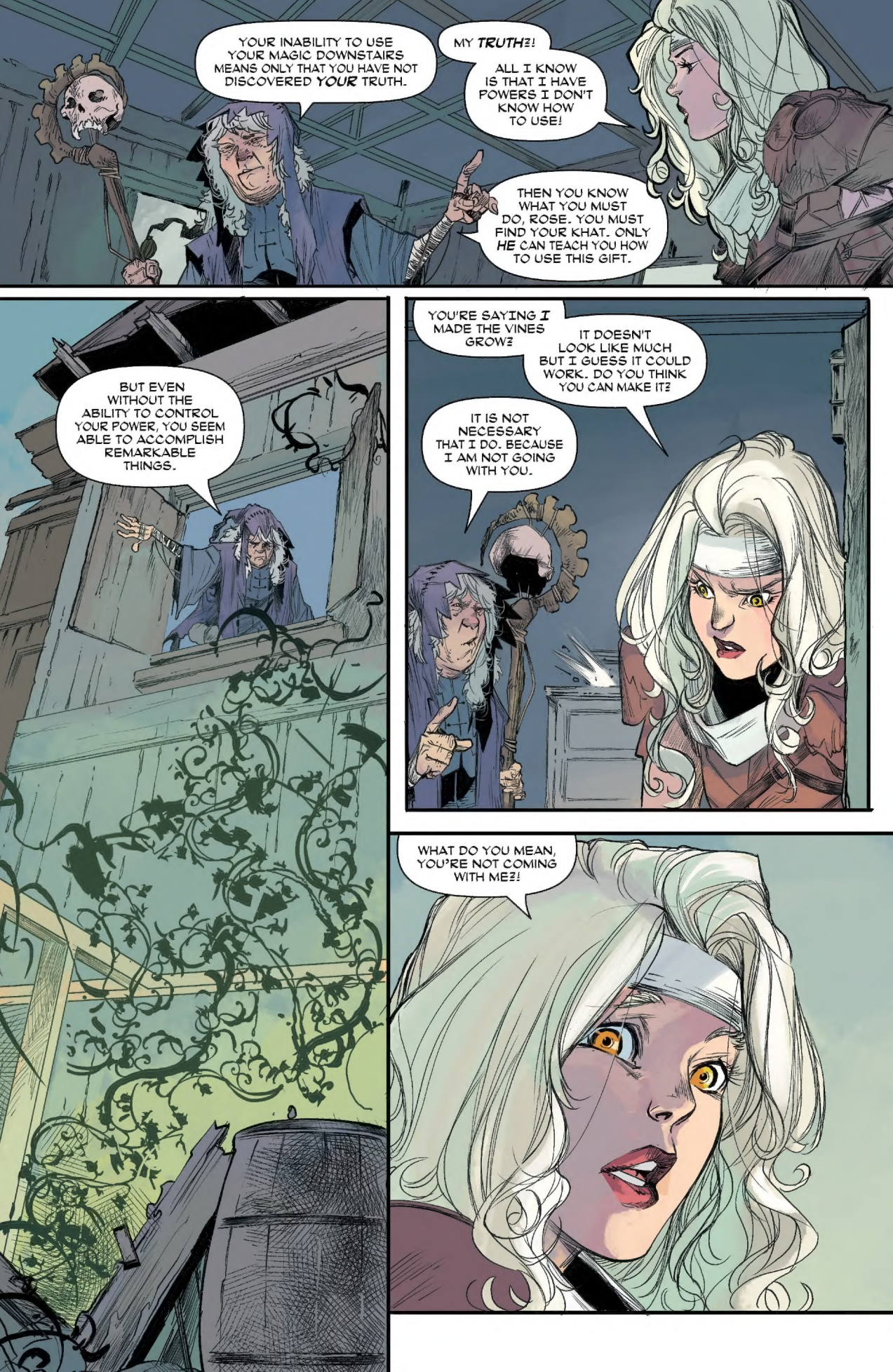
UHHH, I'M NOT SURE WHAT YOU WERE GOING FOR ILA, BUT I THINK YOU JUST MADE THEM MAD.
MY MAGIC! YOU SAID IT WAS TRIGGERED BY A NEED TO PROTECT OTHERS...
IT'S NOT WORKING!
GOOD. WE NEED EVERY ADVANTAGE WE CAN GET!
ILA! HELP!
HOW 'BOUT CHA PUT DOWN THE SWORD, KITTEN, 'FORE SOMEONE GETS HURT.
CRASH!
FORGET ABOUT YOUR MAGIC AND FIGHT, ROSE! THESE MEN KILLED YOUR MOTHER AND BURNED YOUR VILLAGE...
GIVE UP, GIRLIE! A PRETTY LIL' THING LIKE YOU BELONGS IN THE KITCHEN, NOT SWINGIN' A SWORD. YA AIN'T GOT NO CHANCE 'GAINST A COUPLE O' QUEEN'S GUARDS.

MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT. THE KITCHEN IS A GREAT PLACE TO SPICE THINGS UP!
MY EYES! AHHHH! THE BITCH BLINDED ME!
ROSE! TO THE STAIRS!
MARGARET MUST HAVE SENT FOR REINFORCEMENTS!
ON MY WAY!

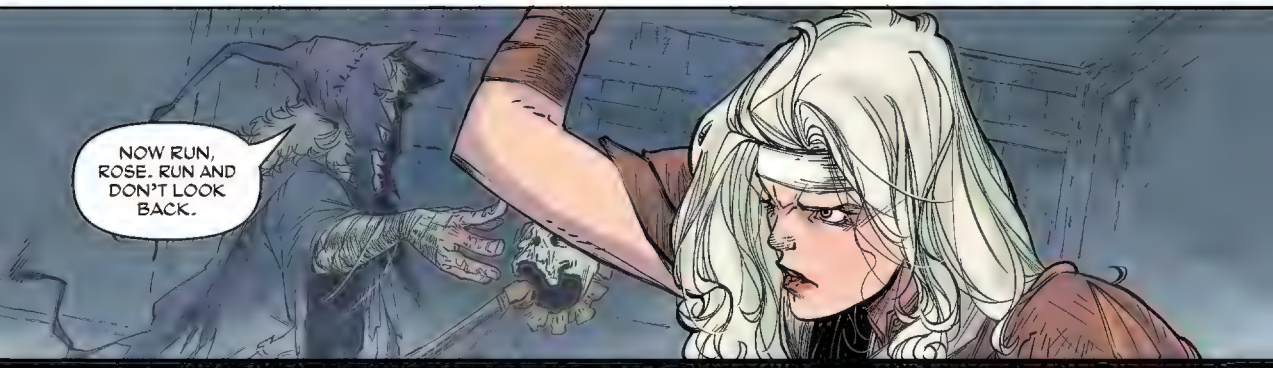
THERE'S TOO MANY OF THEM! THERE'S NO WAY WE'RE GOING TO BE ABLE TO FIGHT OUR WAY PAST ALL OF THEM NOW.
AGREED. FORTUNATELY, THIS OLD BAT STILL HAS A FEW TRICKS UP HER SLEEVE.
LOOK OUT!
BOOM!
DOWN THE HALL, SECOND DOOR ON THE RIGHT.
HURRY!
URROMPFF!
GOOD GIRL. THAT SHOULD BUY US A FEW MINUTES.
SOME GUARDIAN I AM. HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO SAVE THE WORLD WHEN I CAN'T EVEN USE MY MAGIC TO SAVE THE TWO OF US?

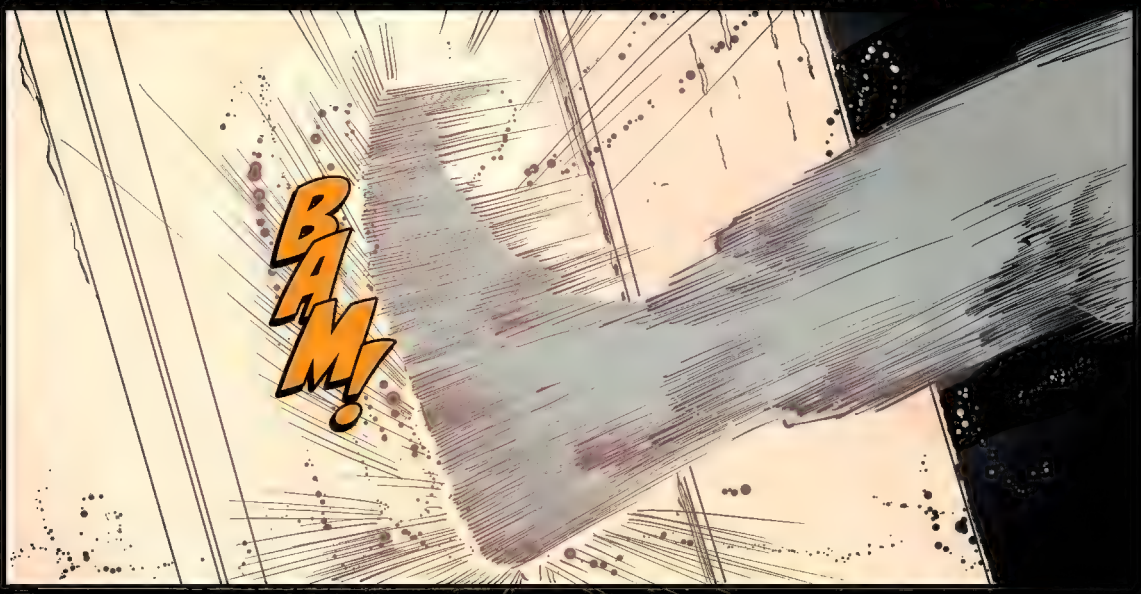
"YOU DON'T HAVE ANY MORE SURPRISES UP YOUR SLEEVES DO YOU?"
BOOM!
TWOOOT
YEP, ILA'S IN THERE ALL RIGHT!
MOVE! HE'S CALLING IN REINFORCEMENTS! WE NEED TO GET ROSE AND ILA OUT OF THERE! NOW!
TWOO
EERCK!
SHHHHHOOK!
WHERE DID THAT COME FROM?!
LOOKS LIKE WE GOT SOME REINFORCEMENTS OF OUR OWN!
LET'S DO THIS.

DRUCILLA HAS SEARCHED MANY YEARS FOR YOU, BROTHER.
WE HAVE WAITED MANY YEARS FOR YOU, BROTHER. COME, JOIN US.
AND BE A PAWN FOR DRUCILLA, TURNED AGAINST THE LAND I WAS BORN TO PROTECT?
NEVERRRRRRRR!
I WAS HOPING YOU WOULD FEEL THAT WAY, THORNE.


YOUR INABILITY TO USE YOUR MAGIC DOWNSTAIRS MEANS ONLY THAT YOU HAVE NOT DISCOVERED *YOUR* TRUTH.
MY *TRUTH*?!
ALL I KNOW IS THAT I HAVE POWERS I DON'T KNOW HOW TO USE!
THEN YOU KNOW WHAT YOU MUST DO, ROSE. YOU MUST FIND YOUR KHAT. ONLY *HE* CAN TEACH YOU HOW TO USE THIS GIFT.
BUT EVEN WITHOUT THE ABILITY TO CONTROL YOUR POWER, YOU SEEM ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH REMARKABLE THINGS.
YOU'RE SAYING *I* MADE THE VINES GROW?
IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE MUCH BUT I GUESS IT COULD WORK. DO YOU THINK YOU CAN MAKE IT?
IT IS NOT NECESSARY THAT I DO. BECAUSE I AM NOT GOING WITH YOU.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU'RE NOT COMING WITH ME?!

THIS IS A JOURNEY YOU MUST MAKE ALONE. TRUST YOURSELF AND YOUR KHAT. TOGETHER, YOU WILL KNOW HOW TO SAVE US.

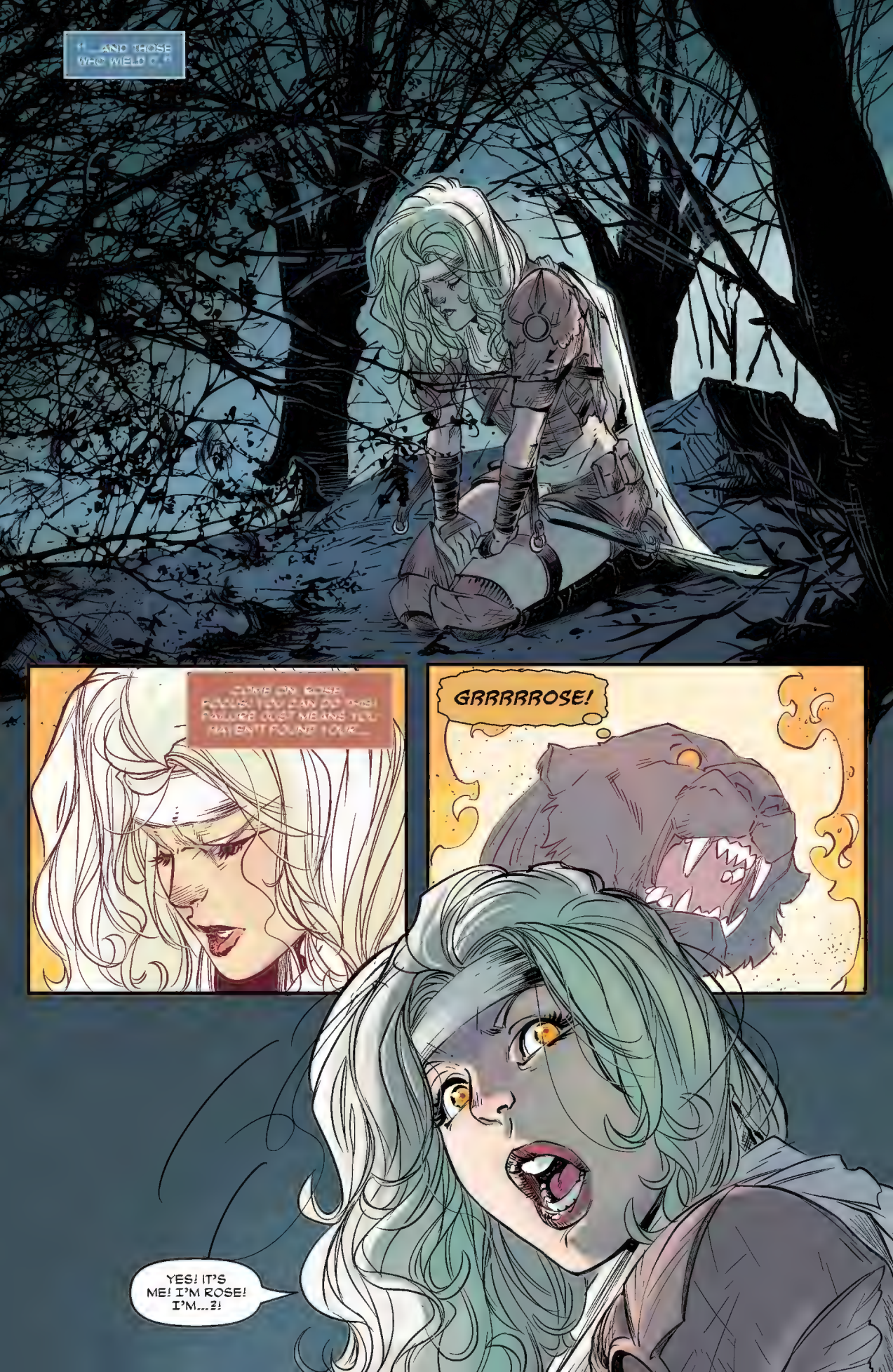

NOW RUN, ROSE. RUN AND DON'T LOOK BACK.


BAM!

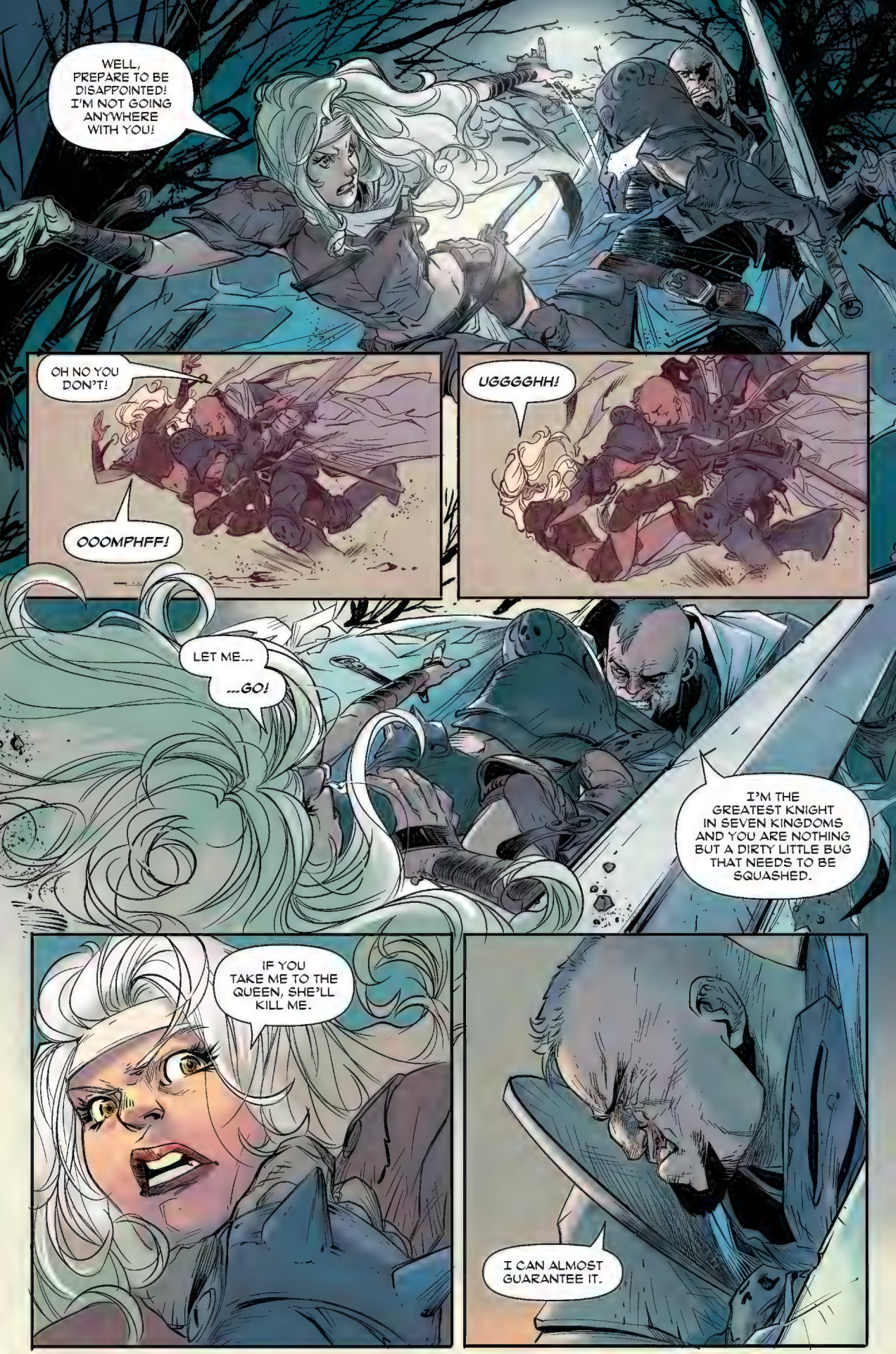
HIIIYAH!
SO MUCH FOR SUBTLE.
THEY'RE UPSTAIRS.
FEL, BJARK, COVER ME!
IT'S TWO POINTS FOR A HEAD SHOT, RIGHT?
THIS ISN'T A GAME, FEL!
LOSER SAYS WHAT?
JUST MAKE SURE YOU GET EVERYONE.
WE DON'T NEED WORD OF THIS GETTING BACK TO THE QUEEN.
I'M GOING TO GET ROSE AND ILA.

CONDITIONS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE CONTINUE TO WORSEN, YOUR MAJESTY. FARMERS ABANDONING THEIR FIELDS... AND MORE REFUGEES ARRIVE EVERY DAY.
IF IT DOESN'T RAIN SOON, THERE WON'T BE ENOUGH FOOD IN THE CITY TO LAST THE WINTER.
THEN LOCK THE GATES, YOU FOOL.
DO YOU HONESTLY BELIEVE I CARE ABOUT THE LIVES OF A FEW WORTHLESS PEASANTS?
THE MORE PEOPLE WHO DIE NOW, THE FEWER MOUTHS TO FEED. I HAVE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT.
ONE OF OUR GARRISONS HAS BEEN ATTACKED BY REBELS. TELL LILITH TO READY THE GUARD.
YES, MY QUEEN.
WE LEAVE FOR MILLHAVEN IN THE MORNING.

MY FALLEN HAVE STILL NOT RETURNED.
SOMETHING TELLS ME THERE IS MORE TO THIS REBELLION THAN A FEW SIMPLE PEASANTS.
THEY THINK TO TEST ME... TO EXPOSE MY WEAKNESS!
P...P...PLEASE. I'LL DO ANYTHING. ⊰SOB⊱ I...I...J...J...JUST WANT TO GO HOME.
I WILL SHOW THEM THAT I HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO RULE! TO BE QUEEN! THAT I HAVE THE STRENGTH TO DO WHAT MUST BE DONE!
OH GREAT AND FEARLESS BALOR.
THE MAGIC OF THE GUARDIANS HAS RETURNED TO TTEREVE.
EVEN NOW ITS FORCES THREATEN TO RISE UP AND DESTROY ALL THAT WE HAVE WORKED FOR.
I PRAY, ACCEPT THIS SACRIFICE AS PROOF OF THE STRENGTH OF MY DEVOTION.
N...N... NO!
I WILL NOT FAIL!
OH GREAT BALOR! HELP ME PREPARE THE WAY FOR YOUR RETURN AND GIVE THIS LAND AND ITS PEOPLE THE REWARD IT SO RICHLY DESERVES! THE DESTRUCTION OF ALL MAGIC...


...AND THOSE WHO WIELD ...
COME ON, ROSE. PLEASE! YOU CAN DO THIS! FAILURE JUST MEANS YOU HAVEN'T FOUND YOUR...
GRRRRROSE!
YES! IT'S ME! I'M ROSE! I'M...?!

ON YOUR FEET, SPELLCASTER, AND DON'T EVEN *THINK* ABOUT USING YOUR POWER ON ME.
SILENCE! I KNOW EXACTLY *WHO* AND *WHAT* YOU ARE.
PLEASE... I DON'T WANT ANY TROUBLE.
THE QUEEN WILL KNOW JUST WHAT TO DO WITH YOU.
HOW I WILL RELISH YOUR AGONY.


WELL, PREPARE TO BE DISAPPOINTED! I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE WITH YOU!
OH NO YOU DON'T!
OOOMPHFF!
UGGGGHH!
LET ME...
...GO!
I'M THE GREATEST KNIGHT IN SEVEN KINGDOMS AND YOU ARE NOTHING BUT A DIRTY LITTLE BUG THAT NEEDS TO BE SQUASHED.
IF YOU TAKE ME TO THE QUEEN, SHE'LL KILL ME.
I CAN ALMOST GUARANTEE IT.

THAT'S YOUR QUEEN'S VERSION OF JUSTICE, ISN'T IT? KILLING INNOCENT PEOPLE WHO JUST WANT TO LIVE IN PEACE?
YOUR HAIR GIVES YOU AWAY AS QUICKLY AS YOUR LIES...GUARDIAN.
I SAW WHAT YOU AND THAT LITTLE BAND OF MISFITS WHO CALL THEMSELVES REBELS DID IN MILLHAVEN.
YOU CALL THAT LIVING IN PEACE?
NO. DEATH IS TOO GOOD FOR YOU GUARDIANS AFTER WHAT YOU AND YOUR KHATZ DID TO THIS LAND.
WITHHOLDING YOUR POWER, LETTING THE PEOPLE DIE WHEN KING HENRY TRIED TO DO WHAT WAS RIGHT AND MAKE HIS FIRSTBORN, DRUCILLA, HEIR TO THE THRONE.

MAYBE BECAUSE THEY KNEW THAT A TRUE QUEEN DOESN'T NEED TO SPREAD FEAR AND TERROR THROUGH THE LAND.
SHE WAS THE ONLY ONE WITH THE COURAGE TO WEAN US AND OUR LAND FROM THE SOUL-SUCKING POWER OF YOU GUARDIANS.
SHE DESERVED TO BE QUEEN.
DRUCILLA SAVED US.
TOO BAD THERE'S NO ONE HERE TO SAVE YOU.
YOU'RE JUST AS CRAZY AS SHE IS! AND I'M GOING TO DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO BRING YOU BOTH DOWN.
YOU CAN TRY.
GET OFF ME!
SNAP
BE STILL. DID YOU HEAR THAT?

CAN YOU HEAR ME, GUARDIAN?! IT IS YOUR KHAT THORNE. PLEASE! I NEED YOUR HELP!
I SAID GET OFF!
THUNK
URGH!
I'M COMING, THORNE!
GET BACK HERE!
THORNE! WHERE ARE YOU?! TELL ME HOW TO FIND YOU.

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I LAST HUNTED DOWN A GUARDIAN. BUT SINCE YOU'VE DECIDED TO MAKE A GAME OUT OF IT, THERE'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW.
SHHHUNCK!
OH, CRAP!
I HATE GAMES.
ROSE, YOU'RE CLOSE, I CAN FEEL IT. FOCUS ON THE SOUND OF MY VOICE. CLOSE YOUR EYES AND YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO FEEL ME.

UHHHH, CLOSING MY EYES ISN'T EXACTLY AN OPTION RIGHT NOW!
THE AIR REEKS WITH THE STENCH OF YOUR FEAR, GUARDIAN.
AND IF YOU'RE SCARED NOW, JUST WAIT 'TIL YOU SEE WHAT I HAVE PLANNED.
QUEEN DRUCILLA JUST SAID I HAD TO BRING YOU BACK ALIVE. SHE DIDN'T SAY IN HOW MANY PIECES.
GOTCHA!

RUNNING ONLY PROLONGS THE INEVITABLE. GIVE IN TO YOUR FATE, GIRL!
I'M TRYING, BUT YOU'RE NOT IT!
THERE!
GET AWAY FROM THE KHAT!
TIME'S UP! THE GAME ENDS HERE, GUAR...

WELL, NOW WHAT HAVE WE HERE? IT LOOKS LIKE THORNE WAS SO HAPPY TO SEE US, HE BROUGHT A GIFT.
NEXT MONTH: SACRIFICE!

NEXT MONTH

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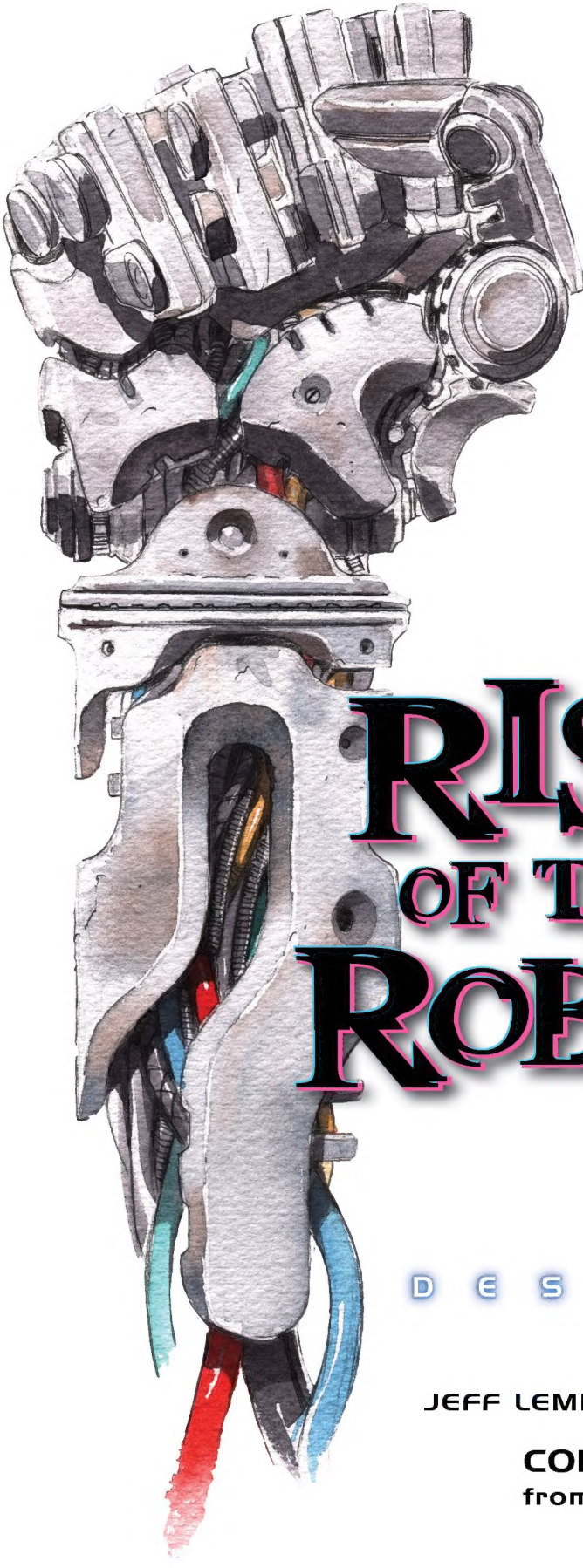

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